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INTRODUCING eBUSINESS AT CAL POLY POMONA

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ABSTRACT

Cal Poly Pomona's College of Business Administration is in the process of introducing a new eBusiness option to its majors. In spite of the dot.com crash, or perhaps because of it, we believe the need for an understanding of the principles of eBusiness to be greater than ever. Our new eBusiness option is targeted at students who wish to participate in the next generation of dot.com businesses, but who do not seek the technical depth of our computer information systems majors. In creating this new option, we see ourselves at the frontier of institutions of higher education and a key component in the genesis of a new generation of eEntrepreneurs. This paper explores this new option for our business students that we will be offering at Cal Poly Pomona. We believe this paper will be of interest to educators, who, much like ourselves, are only now beginning to consider the importance of this new direction in information systems curricula.

Keywords: Curriculum, eBusiness, eEconomy

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Depending upon your point of view, the current demise of the dot.com industry can be seen as either proof that dot.com businesses are a thing of the past or that we still have much to learn about Internet-based business. We believe the latter. To us, the current economic downturn is a natural and temporary result of overheated growth and that the new economy – post-Internet – will never be the same as the old one. We see the current direction in business today as clearly favoring an eEconomy and with it, the need for business graduates who will be equipped to understand its principles and to manage in this new environment. This paper explores the design of a new option in eBusiness that will be offered at our university. The curriculum will consist of a seven course sequence with implementation beginning in fall 2001.

ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

The new eBusiness option will be housed within our AACSB-approved College of Business Administration. Our university is on the quarter system and awards its business graduates with the degree of Bachelor of

Science in Business Administration. The College includes a total of six academic departments: Accounting; Computer Information Systems; Finance, Real Estate & Law; International Business & Marketing; Management & Human Resources; and Technology & Operations Management. Each department provides at least one option within the business major corresponding to its principal course of study. At this time, a departmental home for the new option in eBusiness has not yet been chosen.

The College currently enrolls approximately 4,300 students. Of particular relevance to us is that our CIS program is now entering its fourth year of restricted enrollment. Because we are unable to satisfy the demand for seats within the CIS option, we were granted the distinction of “impacted” status, which essentially allowed us to raise our admissions standards until the supply and demand are in equilibrium. Although the softening of the economy appears to have reduced some of the excess demand for CIS courses, we still need to remain impacted. Because of this unsatisfied demand for CIS courses, we believe that many business students who were unable to enroll in the CIS program will be interested in studying eBusiness.

THE BUSINESS OF eBUSINESS

While we believe our university to be a pioneer in teaching eBusiness, we are not alone. As shown in Table 1, at this time, the following North American colleges of business have existing programs in eBusiness [3].

Geographically, we see Cal Poly Pomona as the only institution of higher learning in the Western United States, Mexico, and Western Canada offering such an option at this time. Although some schools offer courses in eBusiness and others go farther by including an “emphasis” or “track” in eBusiness, we believe the strength of this program lies in the fact that our eBusiness option is interdisciplinary and carries a status equivalent to such long-standing academic stalwarts as Accounting, Computer Information Systems, Finance, etc. Being interdisciplinary, the faculty that will teach eBusiness courses have been drawn from departments throughout the College. In our viewpoint, this interdisciplinary approach creates a synergy that would

likely not exist if the option were placed within a single

EBZ 301 – Introduction to Electronic Business.

SCHOOL	LOCATION	WEB ADDRESS
University of South Alabama	Mobile, Alabama USA	www.mcob.usouthal.edu
University of Toledo	Toledo, Ohio USA	ecommerce.utoledo.edu
University of Scranton	Scranton, Pennsylvania USA	www.academic.uofs.edu
Texas Christian University	Fort Worth, Texas USA	www.neeley.tcu.edu/ebiz
Old Dominion University	Norfolk, Virginia USA	www.odu-cbpa.org/ ecomm.htm
University of New Brunswick, St. Johns	New Brunswick, Canada	business.unbsj.ca/bba/ bbaecommerce.htm

Table 1: North American Schools Offering eBusiness

traditional academic department.

In crafting its eBusiness option, our school seeks to provide eBusiness students with the abilities to work with both traditional "brick and mortar" businesses, as they adapt to the eBusiness marketplace, as well as "pure" eBusiness organizations – those existing solely as Internet-based entities. A third goal of this option is to provide students with the tools necessary to work in the non-profit sector or for the government [2].

Students in the eBusiness option may also choose to direct their course of study into one of the five areas of specialization shown in Table 2. Each area of specialization requires an additional five courses of coursework [1]

Specialization
Customer Relationship Management
Supply Chain Management
eBusiness Entrepreneurship and Strategy
Accounting and Transaction Processing
Content Creation and Management
Enterprise Integration

THE eBUSINESS CURRICULUM

All business students must take a common core curriculum. These courses, shown in Table 3, consist of a fourteen course sequence including topics from economics, statistics, accounting, computer information systems, finance, marketing, management, and operations management. The eBusiness curriculum extends this core sequence by requiring seven courses specifically focused on eBusiness, plus five additional business courses chosen with advisor approval (see Table 3). An abbreviated description of these courses and their sequence follows [3].

Technology underpinnings of eBusiness, impact on other information systems within a business, impact on business design and strategy including how business strategy shapes and is now being shaped by threats and

Course	Title
EC 201	Principles of Economics I
EC 201	Principles of Economics II
STA 120	Statistics with Applications
ACC 207	Financial Accounting for Decision Making
ACC 208	Managerial Accounting for Decision Making
CIS 310	Management Information Systems
FRL 201	Legal Environment of Business
FRL 300	Managerial Finance I
FRL 301	Managerial Finance II
IBM 301	Principles of Marketing Management
MHR 301	Principles of Management
TOM 301	Managerial Statistics
TOM 301	Production / Operations Management
MHR 410 /	Strategic Management

opportunities in eBusiness.

EBZ 302 – eBusiness Technology. Intensive survey of technologies used to support all aspects of electronic business. Develop a familiarity with the concepts, vocabulary and tools of electronic business technology.

EBZ 303 – eBusiness Customer Relationship Management. Critical role of Life Time Value (LTV). Integration of management, sales, marketing, finance, operations, IT and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to create a true customer-centric focus. Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) markets.

EBZ 304 – eBusiness-enabled Supply Chain Management. Integration of internal company resources to work effectively with the external supply chain; eBusiness concepts and Web technologies to manage the supply

chain; enhancement of a company's overall performance through improved manufacturing capability, market responsiveness, and customer-supplier relationships.

EBZ 305 – eBusiness Enterprise Resource Planning. Automation and integration of corporate functions via enterprise resource technology software. Theory of and hands on practice with ERP software. ERP implementation steps.

EBZ 306 – eBusiness Startup and Development. Start up of Internet (dot-com) companies and development of eBusiness capabilities within existing enterprises, including identifying business opportunities, developing and implementing concepts, business planning, and obtaining financial and investment support. Emphasis on case analysis, including eBusiness failures as well as successful ventures.

EBZ 466 – eBusiness Practicum. Capstone course for eBusiness curriculum. Practical, hands-on projects and/or applied research that integrates concepts and techniques.

The eBusiness curriculum is divided into four tiers beginning with EBZ 301 (Introduction to Electronic Business) and ending with a capstone course, EBZ 466 (eBusiness Practicum). Other required and elective courses are taken in between these two points. The eBusiness curriculum is shown graphically in Figure 1.

CONCLUSION

Developing a new course of study is always challenging, but more so when the curriculum involves leading-edge topics such as those found in eBusiness. In this paper, we have examined the rationale, structure, and contents of the new eBusiness option at our university. For us, this addition to our College of Business Administration's curricula is the logical next step in our ongoing process of curriculum revision and we believe this may be the case for other schools as well.

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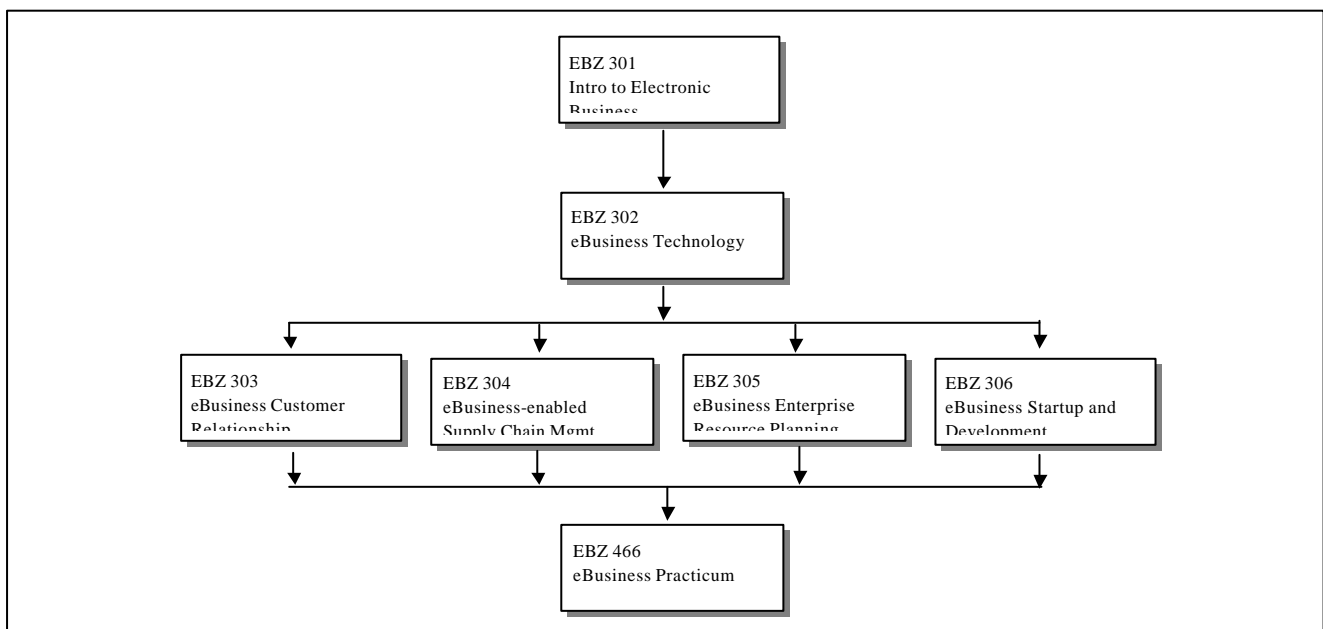


Figure 1: eBusiness Curriculum Hierarchy